

Minutes of the Budget Hearing

12 February 2008

Members present: R. Stephen Leighton, Chairman, and Lynn Sweet.

Public hearing was called to order at 6:35 P.M. The purpose of this public hearing is to review the proposed budget and certain warrant articles to be voted on at the March 22, 2008 Town Meeting. Notice of this hearing was published in Foster's Daily Democrat on January 31, 2008, and posted at the Post Office, Town Office and Strafford Community Calendar.

A list of those attending is attached as an addendum to these minutes.

It was noted that Article 1 is for the election of officers and will be voted on March 11, 2008.

Articles 2, 3 and 4 were read with little or no discussion.

Article 5 was read requesting \$7,000. to add to the non-capital reserve fund for the purpose of funding any future bridge repairs/construction. This would bring the existing fund balance to \$37,000+. Information on cost and application procedure will be reviewed by Road Agent.

Article 6 was read requesting \$433,430. for the operation and maintenance of the Police Department. It was noted that this year's budget includes the annual cost for the "new officer" added in 2007 as well as a reduction in part time hours. Concern was raised over the need for more detailed information on the 2007 budget, the actual expenditures for 2007 and the proposed budget for 2008, for discussion purposes. It was noted that the information will be included in the Town Report and the Police Chief would have the information available the following week.

Articles 7 and 8 were read. No discussion.

The intent of articles 9 and 10 was explained. This is intended to create a revolving fund for the purpose of funding ambulance personnel and associated costs at some future date. The Selectmen would include an article on the warrant and ask for a withdrawal from this revolving fund to help fund the costs.

Article 11 requests \$80,000. for the second year's payment on the lease agreement for the purchase of the new pumper/tanker.

Article 12 was read. No questions.

Article 13 was read and type of equipment involved was discussed.

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Article 14 was read requesting \$20,000. to be added to the capital reserve fund established in 2007 for the purpose of repairs and/or replacement of the Town owned dock located on Water Street. It was noted that \$20,000. was placed in this fund last year. Last year the project was estimated to cost between \$50,000. and \$80,000. Mr. Cournoyer is working with the Town and State on this project.

Article 15 was read requesting \$1,144,148. for general Town operations. One resident voiced dissatisfaction over expending money for web hosting of the assessment records. Others supported it. It was noted that the information is all public information and this has cut down on the traffic and the volume of interruptions to the staff. Appraisers use this information for comps for sales and mortgage refinances. It was noted that the cost of road maintenance was up. The weather and necessary winter maintenance were discussed. Expenditures will be reviewed prior to Town Meeting. Board noted the reduction in the appropriation for the Recycling/Transfer Station operations as well as the increased revenues from recycling from \$18,421. in 2006 to \$26,407. in 2007. It was also noted that this budget includes the final payment on our revolving loan with the State for the Landfill Closure. We will be receiving a loan reimbursement in the amount of \$14,772. from the State that will help defray this cost. Our overall general operations article is down slightly.

Article 16 was read. Public was advised that we would not be recommending a "pay as you throw" program.

Article 17 was read asking to vote to discontinue the use of Snackerty Road (a.k.a. Church Road) as a public way. Public was advised that we are doing this in cooperation with the Town of Barnstead.

Article 18 (by petition) was read asking to re-allocate the land use change tax distribution to that only 50% goes to the conservation fund and the remaining 50% is returned to the general fund.

Article 19 was read asking to form a committee to study the need to re-open the following Class VI roads for fire and safety purposes; Old Whig hill Road, Scribner/Cross Road and Barn Door Gap Road.

Copies of the informational forms (i.e. Warrant, Budget, Estimated 2008 Tax Rate and Town Hall Building) are attached as an addendum to these minutes.

As there were no further questions or discussion, a motion was made, seconded and voted to adjourn the public hearing. The public hearing was adjourned at 7:15P.M.